

# News Advisory



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Public Safety Warning

### ***High Surf, Dangerous Conditions Expected along Coast***

An intense storm system that originated off the coast of Japan and continued into the lower latitudes of the Central Pacific is expected to generate large surf into the coastal waters of California, State Park officials said today.

Beaches along the California coast that are westerly facing can expect fairly high surf that is very powerful due to the long period swell. Forecasted surf is expected to gradually increase in size through Wednesday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2005 with surf heights of 12-15 feet possible. The large surf should continue into Friday and then subside through the weekend.

This will be a large swell, with a long wave periods. "Park visitors may be fooled into thinking that the waterline is safer than it is due to long lulls between sets of waves," said Alex Peabody, Aquatic Specialist with the State Parks Public Safety Division. "Due to the battering of the coastline from the storms in December and early January, the ocean bottom is very torn up along the coast and the public needs to be aware that strong rip currents are to be expected," advises Peabody.

He cautions visitors to avoid exposed beach and rock areas close to the surf line. These areas can seem safe from most breaking waves, but the pattern of breaking waves produces a periodic sequence of large, very strong surges that can wash over rocks and beaches great distances and take visitors by surprise. Watch from a distance, not up close!

"In the interest of public safety, swimming, wading and water sports should be avoided. Popular surfing areas in our state parks may see extreme conditions. Certain state park areas may need to be closed due to the high surf. Please check your local state park office for the updated information and local conditions," said Peabody.

"Be preventative, and be safe out there," he said.

The following information is provided courtesy of the United States Lifesaving Association, in partnership with [NOAA's National Weather Service](#)

## How to Avoid and Survive Rip Currents

### Learn how to swim!

- Never swim alone.
- Be cautious at all times, especially when swimming at unguarded beaches. If in doubt, don't go out!
- Whenever possible, swim at a lifeguard protected beach.
- Obey all instructions and orders from lifeguards.
- If caught in a rip current, remain calm to conserve energy and think clearly.
- Don't fight the current. Swim out of the current in a direction following the shoreline. When out of the current, swim towards shore.
- If you are unable to swim out of the rip current, float or calmly tread water. When out of the current, swim towards shore.
- If you are still unable to reach shore, draw attention to yourself: face the shore, wave your arms, and yell for help.
- If you see someone in trouble, get help from a lifeguard. If a lifeguard is not available, have someone call 9-1-1. Throw the rip current victim something that floats and yell instructions on how to escape. **Remember, many people drown while trying to save someone else from a rip current.**

For more information on rip currents go to: [www.usla.org/ripcurrents](http://www.usla.org/ripcurrents)

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